

**Review of Recherches cliniques et thérapeutiques sur l'épilepsie, l'Hystérie et l'Idiotie by Désiré Magloire Bourneville**

**Publication/Creation**

1840-1909

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MS. 4575

8th Review

1 1/2 pp

Turner

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Recherches Cliniques et Thérapeutiques  
Sur l'Épilepsie, l'Hystérie, et l'Idiotie  
par Bourneville, Médecin de Bicêtre,  
Volume XVI. Paris, 1896: aux Bureaux  
du Progrès Médical, ~~H. P.~~ & Félix Alcan  
Pages 250 with 31 figures & 8 plates: Price 7/6.

This is an unusually interesting  
number of an interesting series of Reports  
on the work done at the Bicêtre and  
its allied institutions by Dr. Bourneville  
& his colleagues. It treats of not only  
of the strictly medical work but of  
much that is "pedagogic" in methods  
of training mentally-deficient children;  
& in the first division of the book we  
find an illustrated dissertation on  
the primary modes of primary instruction,  
found appropriate in such cases. A  
plate showing how the airing courts  
transformed into gardens with beds of

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varying geometrical shapes, serving for  
ofensive instruction, is suggestive of  
what might be done in the extension of  
out-door treatment in this country. It  
would appear that on the 31<sup>st</sup> December  
1895, 519 <sup>defective children</sup> children were under treatment  
at the Asylum, of whom 494 were <sup>stated</sup> ~~reported~~  
to be idiots, imbeciles or epileptics, and  
25 reputed "non-alienés". 5 were affected  
with deaf-mutism, 8 with blindness,  
5th were cripples & 81 hemiplegic.  
The admissions during the year had  
been 99, the discharges 79 & the  
deaths 24. In the table of causes of  
death (which is very complete) pulmonary  
tubercle is noted in 10 cases, & tubercle  
is suggested in some others. The question  
of the desirability of setting apart a  
separate department for tubercular  
cases, mooted in connection with some  
English institutions, might be worth

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weighing at the Bicêtre. The absence of  
the Thyroid, & its weight when present,  
have been ascertained at all the autopsies  
made during 1895, also the weight of the  
Thyroid gland (which does not appear to  
have been absent in any case). Of the  
"Fondation Vallée" (also under Dr.  
Bonneville's direction) there seems to be  
overcrowding, as originally intended  
for 100 it now contains 160 patients.  
During 1895 there were 6 deaths, at  
least one of which appears to be from tubercle.  
It is proposed to add 100 beds to this  
establishment.

Another Section of the Report deals  
with the subject of Special classes  
for backward children annexed to ordinary  
elementary schools. Bonneville recommends  
the creation of such classes in the various  
arrondissements of Paris, following the  
example set by the London School Board.

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The second part of the Report ~~is~~ is devoted to clinical & pathologic observations, in which the relations of meningeal inflammation to idiosy and Epilepsy are elucidated by careful autopsies. The histories of the cases are fully given as well as the post mortem appearances; & for those wishing to save themselves trouble there is a brief summary preceding each detailed case. In a case of Epilepsy, with localized cerebral atrophy, treatment by the "injections of Brown-Séquard" was tried with the result of augmenting the fits. A case of Microcephalic idiosy in which double craniectomy had been performed at the age of 8 by Lannelongue is described as having displayed but "insignificant" mental improvement consecutive to the operation, while the post-mortem showed that there was complete

ossification of the jugular sutures, & it was noted that the branches in the craniotomies (one measuring 8 centimeters by 3 1/2) were filling up with new bone (within 3 years of the operation). A case in which one central kidney only was found, with other malformations & disarrangements of the viscera is interesting from the teratological point of view. But perhaps the most interesting, in view of recent discussions, are the 3 cases of sporadic cretinism (or as Bournville calls them myxoedema - long idiosy) treated by thyroid ingestion, of whom portraits are given at successive stages of treatment. The patients were respectively 30, 20 & 14 years of age, & Bournville <sup>observes</sup> remarks that the inconveniences of the treatment were <sup>excessive</sup> (e.g. diminution of weight & elevation of temperature) were less marked with the

younger cases. Considerable amelioration, mental & physical, ~~was~~ resulted in each case, & of one it is remarked that the child gained 3 notes in the register of her voice! Elaborate charts showing the variations of weight & of temperature during 4 months' treatment is appended; & we may remark that the dosage - which is also shown graphically - is in excess of that customary in England, half a lobe being commonly given by Bonnevillie & occasionally a whole lobe of the Thyroid of the Sheep.

Some admirable full-sized representations of abnormal and diseased cerebral hemispheres (reproduced from photographs) close this volume, the perusal of which we cordially recommend to our readers.